

Jamaica Revisited: April, 1974

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I thought it of interest to record some of my collecting in Jamaica at a different time of year from my first visit in September 1971 when I had the company of Mr. Theodore Homer (*vide* this journal **84**: 219-223 and 242-247). I had the opportunity of revisiting this grand island through a further invitation from Dr. Charles and Mrs. Helen Goodall to stay with them at their lovely house three miles east of Port Antonio on the north-east coast. As before, during my three-week stay with them my hosts gave me every kindness and lavish hospitality.

I set out by air from Heathrow on 6th April and after stops at Bermuda and Nassau in the Bahamas we touched down at Kingston just as it was getting dark. A car was waiting to take me the 90 miles along the coast road so that it was quite late when I reached Williamsfield House. I had a very warm welcome from my hosts and found nothing had changed since my previous visit 2½ years before. This was the period of heavy rains and we had a cloudburst my first night, but each morning the skies cleared and we were able to see what was on the wing. I was soon able to gauge several new species I had not seen in 1971 and most of these appeared in the garden of Williamsfield House. On the 8th, another fine day after rain, I had my first sighting of that very prevalent West Indian Swallowtail, *Battus polydamas jamaicensis* Rothschild & Jordan. This fine local form kept appearing on the rough bank below my host's garden, but was by no means easy to waylay, as they seldom settled. But even more spectacular were the males of the bright yellow *Papilio thersites* Fab., an endemic species with an expanse of five inches. This grand insect was to be seen dashing about at great speed and almost impossible to net on the wing. A good many of the butterflies seen in 1971 were again apparent in the garden, especially the delightful little Nymphaline *Mestra dorcas* Fab., while *Dryas julia delila* Fab. was dashing about accompanied by an occasional *Siproeta stelenes* L. lazily sailing from tree to tree. I revisited my old haunts round the area of the house on the edge of the San San estate and saw several species of the commoner Euremas, notably *E. nise* Cramer, *E. messalina* Fab. and *E. lisa euterpe* Ménétrière. On the very warm afternoon of the 9th my hosts motored me to Rosselle Falls which was halfway between Port Antonio and Kingston. It was very sweltering at quite 90°F. in the shade when we climbed on to the plateau and saw most of the species already noted in the garden with the addition of *canasus gilippus jamaicensis* Bates and the Fritillary *Euptoieta hegesia* Cramer, but our main quarry the small endemic Swallowtail, *Graphium marcellinus* Doubleday, did not put in an appearance, though it had been prevalent in this area a few years previously. En route we had stopped near a banana

plantation where we caught sight of the huge nyphaline *Historis odius* Fab., also with an expanse of five inches. However, the following morning in the garden we were treated to a fine sight when one of this grand insect came to feed on a fallen and very over ripe bread fruit, but it was virtually unapproachable. The little blue *Leptotes cassius theonus* Lucas was swarming in the garden slope together with a few *Hemiargus hanno* Fab. and a sporadic Hairstreak *Strymon columella cybira* Hewitson. The lights of the Dragon Plaza below the house were quite productive on the 11th with several species of Sphinges and other desirable night-flying species. Good Friday, 12th April, was an eventful day when in the heat of the afternoon we visited a spot called ironically Happy Hill in the direction of Port Morant. After seeing quite a galaxy of insects mainly species generally prevalent, the locality did not live up to its name as our car broke down on a very deserted route and we had to walk back the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the main road where a taxi rescued us and we only got back at 10 p.m. On Easter Sunday we had a visit from Mr. Derek Stone, a very keen collector, who kindly invited us back to his house on the San San estate where we looked in vain for species of Phyciodes. My host had a free day from his medical duties on 16th April, another very warm occasion when we were tempted further afield to the edge of the Blue Mountains.

We travelled up the broad valley of the Rio Grande, to near Moortown, then up a very bumpy road through Millbrook till it ended at a very wild spot called Four Feet. En route we had seen *H. odius* and a number of *P. battus*. At our final halting ground we were in the area where that splendid insect *Papilio homerus* Fab., had often been seen, but none obliged that day. However I have heard recently from Dr. Goodall, that he and Dr. Turner were treated in August 1974 to a fine sight of a fair number of this wonderful butterfly flying high up in a remote part of these mountains. Before we left we saw a large flight of the endemic green parrot emanating from the forests of the Blue Mountains. 17th April saw the reappearance of *H. odius* on the garden breadfruit, but it was always very wary. The first of the little endemic nymphaline *Dynamine egea* Fab. were seen with its dimorphic sexes. On the afternoon of the 18th we penetrated to a very secluded part of the San San Estate which had proved so fruitful in 1971 and it was not less so on this occasion as after trying to take several *Papilio thersites* on the wing I spotted a pair about to mate on the ground, including the magnificent black female which managed to escape. However the male was quite a prize. It was at this period that a number of Skippers of various species were seen. Notably in this locality we saw another endemic species of large size and deep purple brown in colour, *Astraptes jaira* Butler, never a common insect. The next two days were fine and warm but most collecting was done in my host's garden where the fine large females of *B. polydamas* were now becoming more prevalent. The next morning of the 21st saw us once

more on the San San estate where in a friend's garden Dr. Goodall just missed another pair of *P. thersites*. Another very warm day broke upon us on 22nd April. In the drive leading to the garden I swept off a small Lycaenid which proved to be the rather scarce little *Strymon bazochii gundlachianus* Bates, named Gundlach's Hairstreak, but a greater prize awaited later that day when I netted a large papilio in the garden which turned out to be the female of *Papilio pelaus* Fab. which is seldom seen and much more difficult to obtain than the male, especially in good condition as this example was. 23rd April was another scorcher at 88°F. in the shade when I accompanied Charles Goodall again to our special spot on the San San Estate where *P. thersites* were again careering round with plenty of *Heliconia charitonius simulator* Röber. In the morning I had spotted a spectacular moth on one of the pillars of the verandah of my host's house. It proved to be the very special endemic Hypsid which has recently been named *Stenognatha toddi* Watson of which quite a number of specimens have now been recorded from many parts of eastern Jamaica. We set out early on the 24th intending to penetrate the mountains, but unfortunately another car disorder prevented our going as far as we had intended so we diverged from the main coastal road along a side route in the direction of Haining, where the chance capture of a small blue by Helen Goodall proved to be a female of the very local endemic species *Leptotes perkinsae* Kaye.

The next three very warm days I concentrated on the lepidopterous inhabitants of the garden of my hosts which as in 1971 was possibly the most productive area I had met. Here the ubiquitous *Dione vanillae* L. was abundant skimming low over the herbage with almost as many *Precis evarete zonalis* Felder, always very wary and none too easy to net. The Skippers seemed to be more numerous and were engaging our attention. On 26th April, we netted a fine pair of the large brown tailless species with small transparent spots, *Euphyes singularis insolata* Butler. The next day we had the excitement of seeing but just missing a huge black female of *Papilio thersites* which dashed passed the house. The same afternoon another visitor was the large endemic brown and yellow Skipper *Pyrrhocalles jamaicensis* Schaus which was flitting about the flowers and very difficult to follow on the wing. That fine large all yellow *Eurema dina parvumbra* Kaye also put in an appearance. These nights too were quite productive both on the verandah of the house and at the Dragon Plaza centre with several huge Sphinges including *Pachylia ficus* L. and many interesting Arctiids, which will be enumerated later.

On 28th April I set out by car with my hosts heading for Kingston. Our first stop along the coastal road was once more at the Rosselle Falls, where little of note was on the wing. However, as we neared the pass known as White Horses, there was a sudden wealth of insects on the wing. The chief and most spectacular species was the great Brimstone-like species *Anteos maerula* Fab. which was careering about the bush on

the main road, but most dodgy for catching. Several *Papilio andraemon* Hübn. were about, the first seen on this visit, together with a few *B. polydamas*. An unexpected capture was a somewhat worn *Historis acheronta cadmus* Cramer, only slightly smaller than *H. odius*. We reached Kingston in the early afternoon when we had a warm welcome from Dr. Tom Turner whose grand collection of Jamaican butterflies we feasted over. Later that day he took us to the north of the capital to Stony Hill where, though very windy, several large Skippers were flying including *Aguna asander jasper* Evans. We put up that night at the Mona House Hotel. Helen and Charles Goodall motored back to Port Antonio the next morning when in great heat I collected in some fine rough ground behind the hotel. This produced many *P. andraemon* and *B. polydamas*, though difficult to follow among the dense growth, as also was *Callisto zangis*. A Nymphaline not seen before was *Marpesia elucea pellenis* Godart.

That evening, 29th April, I left by air and was back in England early on the 30th after yet another most enjoyable and profitable sojourn in Jamaica thanks to the kindness and hospitality of my hosts at Williamsfield House. I have thought it once more of interest to enumerate so far as possible the species of butterflies and moths we recorded, a good many of which we also saw in 1971, but many of these were in new localities. But we also saw quite a number of butterflies not noted in the earlier list and these are marked with an asterisk. Williamsfield House is indicated by the letters W.H.

The nomenclature is taken from *Jamaica and its Butterflies* by Martin Brown and B. Heineman, published in 1972.

BUTTERFLIES

Papilionidae

Papilio andraemon Hübn. Only seen on this occasion in and near Kingston.

**Papilio thersites* Fab. Fairly numerous at W.H. and on the San San Estate and also seen near Morant Bay. A few females noted.

Papilio pelaus pelaus Fab. One female taken at W.H., 22nd April.

Battus polydamas jamaicensis Rothschild & Jordan. Plentiful round W.H. in both sexes and almost in every other locality visited.

Pieridae

Ascia monuste eubotea Godart. Mainly seen in numbers near Boston.

Eurema elathea Cramer. Few seen at White Horses on 28th April.

Eurema messalina messalina Fab. Numerous round W.H.

Eurema dina parvumbra Kaye. One taken at W.H. and another on San San.

Eurema lisa euterpe Ménétrière. Quite numerous at W.H. and in district.

Eurema nise nise Cramer. Almost as prevalent as the foregoing.

Phoebis sennae sennae L. Plentiful at W.H. and almost everywhere else, including Kingston.

**Anteos maerula maerula* Fab. Many seen at White Horses near Kingston on 28th April.

Satyridae

Callisto zangis Fab. Only seen at San San and at Kingston.

Danaidae

Danaus gilippus berenice Cramer. Seen singly at Rosselle Falls and at Boston.

Heliconidae

Dione vanillae L. Plentiful at W.H. but not seen much anywhere else.

Dryas julia delila Fab. Seen mainly at W.H. and also at San San.

Heliconius charitonius simulator Röber. Few at W.H. and in most other localities, including Mona Hotel, Kingston.

Nymphalidae

**Marpesia eleuthea pellenis* Godart. A worn specimen taken on 29th April in the vicinity of the Mona Hotel, near Kingston.

Historis odius odius Fab. Seen on several occasions at W.H., also near Rosselle Falls and at Millbrook.

Historis acheronta cadmus Fab. One worn specimen taken near White Horses.

Mestra dorcas Fab. Numerous at W.H. and abundant in parts of San San and elsewhere, especially near Haining.

Dynamine egea egea Fab. Only seen in and near W.H. grounds.

Precis evarete zonalis Felder (= *lavinia* L.). Fairly numerous at W.H. and on San San estate.

Anartia jatropha jamaicensis Möschler. Seen almost everywhere but never in numbers. Few at W.H.

Siproeta stelenes stelenes L. Occasionally at W.H. and on San San. Never common.

Euptoieta hegesia hegesia Cramer. Only seen at Rosselle Falls.

Lycaenidae

Strymon columella cybira Hewitson. Few only seen in garden of W.H.

**Strymon bazochii gundlachianus* D. Bates. Three seen and taken at W.H.

Leptotes cassius theonus Lucas. Abundant at W.H. and most other localities.

**Leptotes perkinsae* Kaye. One female of this rare insect taken at Haining on 24th April.

Hemiargus hanno ceraunus Fab. A few at W.H. but not generally common.

Hesperiidae

Urbanus proteus L. A few seen at W.H.

- **Aguna asander jasper* Evans. Seen only at Stony Hill, north of Kingston, on 28th April.
 **Astraptus jaira* Butler. Taken only singly on San San.
 **Caberes potrillo potrillo* Lucas. Taken at Rosselle Falls area.
Gesta gesta gesta Herrich-Schäffer. Seen at Boston and on San San.
Pyrgus oileus L. Numerous at W.H. and in most other localities.
 **Pyrrhocalles jamaicensis* Schaus. Few seen only in garden at W.H.
Cymene tripunctus tripunctus Herrich-Schäffer. Seen in numbers near Boston.
 **Wallengrenia otho vesura* Plötz. A few at W.H. and on San San.
 **Euphyes singularis insolata* Butler. Three or four seen or taken but only at W.H.

MOTHS

All the moths enumerated below were taken at Williams-field House or at the lights at the Dragon Plaza nearby.

Sphingidae

Manduca sexta L., *Manduca brontes* Drury, **Pachylia ficus* L., *Eumorphia satellitia* L., *Enyo lugubris* L., *Xylophanes tersa* L.

Syntomidae

Empyreuma anassa Forbes, **Uraga haemorrhoea* Wkr., *Cosmosoma* spec. near *annexa* H.-S., *Lymnre melanocephala* Wkr.

Hypsiidae

Stenognatha toddi Watson.

Arctiidae

Idalus delicata Möschler, *Ammalo helops* Cramer, *Ecpantheria nigroplaga* Wkr.

Notodontidae

**Hippia lignosa* Möschler.

Drepanidae

**Drepanodes moneta* Druce.

Noctuidae

Asclapha odorata Linn., *Teinoletis simoenta* Guen., *Panula inconstans* Guen., *Aglaonice otignatha* Hamps., **Bendis formularis* Hübn., **Perigea plagiata* Wkr., **Spodoptera eridania* Stoll, **Gonodonta incurva* Sepp., **Dagassa aequalis* Wkr., **Epidromia zetophora* Guen., **Mocis latipes* Guen., **Mocis repanda* Fab., *Cydosia nobilitella* Cramer, **Eulepidotis addens* Wkr., **Epitomiptera orneodalis* Guen.

Geometridae

**Anisodes ordinata* Wkr., *Erastria decrepitaria* Hübn., *Iridopsis vicaria* Wkr.

Cossidae

**Xyleutes jamaicensis* Wkr.

Pyralidae

PYRUSTINAE: *Boeotarcha stimosalis* Warren, *Maruca testulalis* Geyer, *Sylepta prorogata* Hamps., *Sylepta candacalis* Felder, *Phostria apicalis* Lederer.

CHRYSOAUGINAE: *Bonchis munitalis* Lederer, *Megastes brunnealis* Hamps.

In addition, there was a sizeable Notodontid, a small Noctuid and a small Cossid to which names could not be given by the Museum authorities and which may well prove to be undescribed species.

As in 1971, I have had much valuable help in identifying the insects from members of the staff of the British Museum (Natural History) at South Kensington, to whom I would like to express especial thanks for all the trouble they have taken and in particular I would mention Mr. Alan Hayes, Mr. T. G. Howarth, Mrs. A. M. Lane (Miss Grogan), Mr. M. Shaffer, Mr. Alan Watson and, above all, Mr. W. H. Tams who did so much to determine many difficult species, especially among the Noctuidae.

Finally, I would like to express once more my great indebtedness to my hosts Charles and Helen Goodall who did so much to make my second sojourn in Jamaica so enjoyable and so successful.

Reminiscences of a Butterfly Hunter

By the REV. J. N. MARCON

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A year ago an absorbing article was written by Baron C. G. M. de Worms entitled "Memories of collecting in Britain during the last fifty years" (in *Proc. Brit. Ent. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 6(1): 1-15). It may be of further interest to recall some of the delights of the chase in the halcyon days when butterflies were common in certain localities.

For instance, my diary records 425 *Boloria euphrosyne* L. being seen in Abbots Wood in 1943; 477 *B. euphrosyne* and 998 *B. selene* in one day at Dunsfold in 1944; and nearing 500 *Argynnis adippe* D. & S. at the end of June 1943 in Vert Wood without traversing the same piece of ground. It is difficult to estimate the number of *Agriades coridon* Poda at Beachy Head in 1945; when they came off the hillside in the evening to settle on the field above the cliff-top, the corn was blue for half-an-hour or so with the expanded wings of the males; 100,000 or a quarter of a million? It is anybody's guess.

I began collecting enthusiastically in 1921. It soon became clear that the time was not available for butterflies and moths. If in 50 odd years I was fortunate in securing a fairish number of aberrations it must largely be attributed to the "luck of the game", an urge to explore adjacent territory and a determination to persist once a good butterfly had been spotted come what may — characteristics which are commonplace with every serious bug-hunter. On one occasion an insect (a melanic male *Argynnis paphia* L.) took eight hours to catch — three of one day, five of the next. Another time it was 2½ days of unremitting search after a prize had been sighted (a black forewing